In the Claims

1. (Original) A compactor wheel mountable on an axle of a compaction machine, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to an axle of a compaction machine;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge at least about the width of one of said cleats.

2. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 1, wherein said axle guard system further comprises at least one circumferential barrier mounted on said cleat-free area so as to extend above said face.

3. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 2, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier is mounted on said cleat-free area so as to extend radially outward from said face.

4. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 2, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier is mounted on said cleat-free area adjacent said inner circumferential edge of said rim.

5. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 2, wherein each of said cleats has a height, and said at least one circumferential barrier extends above said face a height greater than the height of said cleats.

6. (Original) A compactor wheel mountable on an axle of a compaction machine having a body suitable for compacting refuse, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to an axle of a compaction machine;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of compactor wheel cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to the face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising at least one circumferential barrier extending above said face and adjacent said inner circumferential edge of said rim, wherein said compactor wheel is suitable for supporting the body of a compaction machine.

7. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 6, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier extends radially outward from said face.

8. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 6, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a ring-shaped wall.

9. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 6, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a plurality of circumferentially spaced fins.

10. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 9, wherein said compactor wheel has an inner row of said cleats mounted adjacent to said inner circumferential edge, one of said fins is mounted to said rim between each pair of adjacent cleats forming said row.

11. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 10, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier includes buttressing structure for support.

12. (Original) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 11, wherein said buttressing structure is a broadening of said at least one circumferential barrier at said face of said rim.

13. (Previously Presented) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 6, wherein said axle guard system further comprises a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, said at least one circumferential barrier being mounted on said cleat-free area.

14. (Original) A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

an axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on each end of said axle, one compactor wheel on each side of said body, each said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mounted to one end of said axle,

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face, an inner circumferential edge adjacent to one side of said body and an outer circumferential edge,

a plurality of cleats circumferentially spaced on and mounted to said face of said rim, and

an axle guard system comprising at least one circumferential barrier extending above said face and adjacent said inner circumferential edge of said rim.

15. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a ring-shaped wall.

16. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a plurality of circumferentially spaced fins.

17. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 16, wherein said compactor wheel has an inner row of said cleats mounted adjacent to said inner circumferential edge, one of said fins is mounted to said rim between each pair of adjacent cleats forming said row.

18. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 17, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier includes buttressing structure for support.

19. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 18, wherein said buttressing structure is a broadening of said at least one circumferential barrier at said face of said rim.

20. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said axle guard system further comprises a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge a distance, said at least one circumferential barrier being mounted on said cleat-free area.

21. (Thrice Amended) A compactor wheel mountable on an axle of a compaction machine, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to an axle of a compaction machine having a body;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said hub being mountable to the axle of the compaction machine so that said outer circumferential edge faces away from the body of the compaction machine;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge [, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that, when said compactor wheel is mounted on the axle of the compaction machine, cable, rope and wire refuse to will be at least substantially inhibited from being directed toward and end up wrapped around the axle of the compaction machine on which said compactor wheel is mounted, wherein the rate of buildup of such refuse between said compactor wheel and the body of the compaction machine is at least reduced].

22. (Previously Presented) The compactor wheel as set forth in claim 21, wherein said cleat-free area extends widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge up to about 10 inches.

23. (Thrice Amended) A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

an axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on each end of said axle, one compactor wheel on each side of said body, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to said axle;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said inner circumferential edge being closer to said body than said outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of tooth-shaped compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge a distance to reduce refuse accumulation about the axle of the compaction machine. [, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that cable, rope or wire refuse will be at least substantially inhibited from being directed toward and end up wrapped around said axle of said compaction machine such that the rate of buildup of such refuse between said compactor wheel and said body is at least reduced.]

24. (Canceled)

25. (Thrice Amended) A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

two axles, each axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on each end of each of said axles, each said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to said axle;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said hub being mounted on said axle so that said inner circumferential edge is closer to said body than said outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge for reducing movement of cable, ropes, or wire refuse inward toward said inner circumferential edge of said rim. [, with said cleat-free area being wide enough to at least

substantially inhibit cable, rope or wire refuse from being directed toward and end up wrapped around said axle of said compaction machine, wherein the rate of buildup of such refuse on said axle, between said compactor wheel and said body, is at least reduced.]

26-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 23, wherein said cleat-free area extends widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge up to about 10 inches.

30. (Previously Presented) A wheel assembly for a compacting machine having a frame and a pair of axle assemblies mounted to the frame, comprising:

a cylindrical drum mountable for rotation on each of an opposing end of at least one of the axle assembly, said cylindrical drums being positioned on opposite sides of the frame, each of said cylindrical drums defining an inner periphery adjacent the frame and an outer periphery:

a plurality of teeth disposed circumferentially about each of the cylindrical drums, said teeth extending outwardly from the cylindrical drums a preselected distance and being disposed in a plurality of axially spaced rows with the outermost of said rows being positioned adjacent the outer periphery of each cylindrical drum and the innermost of said rows being spaced from the inner periphery a preselected distance.

31. (Previously Presented) The wheel assembly as set forth in claim 30 wherein an upstanding flange is connected to the inner periphery of each cylindrical drum and extends radially outwardly therefrom a preselected distance.